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Problem-Specific Guides Series
No. 54

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Spectator Violence in Stadiums

by
Tamara D. Madensen
John E. Eck

www.cops.usdoj.gov

Center for
Problem-Oriented Policing

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About the Problem-Specific Guide Series

The *Problem-Specific Guides* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to prevention and to improving the overall response to incidents, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. Neither do they cover all of the technical details about how to implement specific responses. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problem the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who:

- **Understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods.** The guides are not primers in problem-oriented policing. They deal only briefly with the initial decision to focus on a particular problem, methods to analyze the problem, and means to assess the results of a problem-oriented policing project. They are designed to help police decide how best to analyze and address a problem they have already identified. (A companion series of Problem-Solving Tools guides has been produced to aid in various aspects of problem analysis and assessment.)
- **Can look at a problem in depth.** Depending on the complexity of the problem, you should be prepared to spend perhaps weeks, or even months, analyzing and responding to it. Carefully studying a problem before responding helps you design the right strategy, one that is most likely to work in your community. You should not blindly adopt the responses others have used; you must decide whether they are appropriate to your local situation. What is true in one place may not be true elsewhere; what works in one place may not work everywhere.

- **Are willing to consider new ways of doing police business.** The guides describe responses that other police departments have used or that researchers have tested. While not all of these responses will be appropriate to your particular problem, they should help give a broader view of the kinds of things you could do. You may think you cannot implement some of these responses in your jurisdiction, but perhaps you can. In many places, when police have discovered a more effective response, they have succeeded in having laws and policies changed, improving the response to the problem. (A companion series of Response Guides has been produced to help you understand how commonly-used police responses work on a variety of problems.)
- **Understand the value and the limits of research knowledge.** For some types of problems, a lot of useful research is available to the police; for other problems, little is available. Accordingly, some guides in this series summarize existing research whereas other guides illustrate the need for more research on that particular problem. Regardless, research has not provided definitive answers to all the questions you might have about the problem. The research may help get you started in designing your own responses, but it cannot tell you exactly what to do. This will depend greatly on the particular nature of your local problem. In the interest of keeping the guides readable, not every piece of relevant research has been cited, nor has every point been attributed to its sources. To have done so would have overwhelmed and distracted the reader. The references listed at the end of each guide are those drawn on most heavily; they are not a complete bibliography of research on the subject.

- **Are willing to work with others to find effective solutions to the problem.** The police alone cannot implement many of the responses discussed in the guides. They must frequently implement them in partnership with other responsible private and public bodies including other government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private businesses, public utilities, community groups, and individual citizens. An effective problem solver must know how to forge genuine partnerships with others and be prepared to invest considerable effort in making these partnerships work. Each guide identifies particular individuals or groups in the community with whom police might work to improve the overall response to that problem. Thorough analysis of problems often reveals that individuals and groups other than the police are in a stronger position to address problems and that police ought to shift some greater responsibility to them to do so. Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*, provides further discussion of this topic.

The COPS Office defines community policing as "a policing philosophy that promotes and supports organizational strategies to address the causes and reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through problem-solving tactics and police-community partnerships." These guides emphasize *problem-solving* and *police-community partnerships* in the context of addressing specific public safety problems. For the most part, the organizational strategies that can facilitate problem solving and police-community partnerships vary considerably and discussion of them is beyond the scope of these guides.

These guides have drawn on research findings and police practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Even though laws, customs, and police practices vary from

country to country, it is apparent that the police everywhere experience common problems. In a world that is becoming increasingly interconnected, it is important that police be aware of research and successful practices beyond the borders of their own countries.

Each guide is informed by a thorough review of the research literature and reported police practice, and each guide is anonymously peer-reviewed by a line police officer, a police executive, and a researcher prior to publication. The review process is independently managed by the COPS Office, which solicits the reviews.

The COPS Office and the authors encourage you to provide feedback on this guide and to report on your own agency's experiences dealing with a similar problem. Your agency may have effectively addressed a problem using responses not considered in these guides and your experiences and knowledge could benefit others. This information will be used to update the guides. If you wish to provide feedback and share your experiences, send your comments by e-mail to cops_pubs@usdoj.gov

For more information about problem-oriented policing, visit the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing online at www.popcenter.org. This web site offers free online access to:

- The *Problem-Specific Guides series*
- The companion *Response Guides* and *Problem-Solving Tools* series
- Instructional information about problem-oriented policing and related topics
- An interactive problem-oriented policing training exercise
- An interactive *Problem Analysis Module*
- A manual for crime analysts
- Online access to important police research and practices
- Information about problem-oriented policing conferences and award programs.

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The Problem of Spectator Violence in Stadiums

What This Guide Does and Does Not Cover

This guide addresses the problem of spectator violence in stadiums and other arena-type settings. It begins with a discussion of the factors that contribute to such incidents. It then presents a list of questions to help you analyze problems of spectator violence in your jurisdiction. Finally, it reviews responses to the problem, and what is known about them from evaluative research and police practice.

Spectator violence in stadiums is part of a larger set of problems related to misbehavior in sport and concert arenas. It is also related to issues of crowd control at other types of locations. However, this guide addresses only the particular harms that result from spectator-related conflicts occurring within and directly outside stadiums. Related problems not directly addressed in this guide include

- Public intoxication
- Ticket scalping
- Underage drinking
- Crowd control in open fields and along public thoroughfares
- Student party riots
- Littering
- Terrorism acts
- Loitering
- Traffic congestion.

Each of the above problems has a specific opportunity structure and therefore requires separate analysis and response. You may find that these related problems have opportunity structures that overlap with the opportunity structure for spectator violence. By eliminating the opportunity for spectator violence, you can also reduce opportunities for other types of harm (e.g., terrorist acts

§In this guide, we address both actual and threatened incidents of violence. We use the terms violence and aggression interchangeably to refer to such incidents. We also use the terms *stadium* and *arena* interchangeably, while acknowledging that arenas are generally smaller and more often enclosed than stadiums.

or underage drinking). Nevertheless, each problem warrants individual attention. Some of these related problems are covered in other guides in this series, all of which are listed at the end of this guide. For the most up-to-date listing of current and future guides, see www.popcenter.org.

General Description of the Problem

Policing stadium crowds is a difficult task. Spectator aggression is often only one of many public safety concerns.[1] Police are forced to balance the interests of many different parties (e.g., performers who want audience participation, owners and vendors who wish to generate profits). Obviously, police cannot address all causes of spectator violence. It would be difficult to convince team owners that they should discourage highly dedicated fans. In addition, police must protect individuals' rights while maintaining an orderly environment. While spectators have rights, police should not tolerate property destruction and threats or acts of violence.[2]

Spectator violence in stadiums has been a longstanding tradition.§ Documentation of such events is found in texts from ancient Greece and the Roman Empire.[3] These incidents can occur wherever fans gather, including sports competitions (e.g., baseball, basketball, boxing, football, hockey, soccer) and entertainment events (e.g., music concerts, dog shows, theatrical productions). Violence at these events is rare in North America compared with European countries, particularly when compared with violence at soccer matches in Britain, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium.[4] Problems with "football hooligans" in Britain are so widespread that violence occurring at events elsewhere has been labeled the "spread of the English Disease."[5] Violence levels tend to vary by type of entertainment or sporting event and across cultures.[6] While no single factor can explain

why there is less spectator violence in North America,[7] such events' negative impact can be great and warrant specific attention. Recent events, such as the violent outbreak at the 2004 Indiana Pacers and Detroit Pistons basketball game,[8] highlight the need for careful planning and prevention efforts. Failure to prevent these incidents can produce a variety of negative consequences, including injury to spectators, entertainers, and security personnel; decreased public confidence; damage to the reputation of the facility and those providing the entertainment; and property destruction.[9]

The six most common forms of spectator aggression are as follows:

1. Verbal—singing, chanting, and yelling taunts or obscenities
2. Gesturing—signaling to others with threatening or obscene motions
3. "Missile" throwing—throwing items such as food, drinks, bricks, bottles, broken seats, and cell phones at particular or random targets
4. Warming—rushing the field or stage and trying to crash the gates to gain entry, or rushing the exit, both of which may result in injury or death from trampling
5. Property destruction—knocking down sound systems, tearing up the playing field, and burning/damaging the venue or others' property
6. Physical—spitting, kicking, shoving, fistfights, stabbings, and shootings.[10]

Little documentation is available to help us develop a profile of those most likely to engage in the above behaviors. We do know that when physical violence is documented, the perpetrators are most often male.[11] Studies of university students suggest that males are more likely than females to consider acts of aggression at sporting events, although this

difference becomes less pronounced when less physical forms of aggression are considered.[12] Reports of spectator ejections from sporting events suggest that rowdy and abusive fans tend to be middle-class professionals,[13] although ticket prices likely influence this finding. Like the level of violence, we should expect the type of violent spectator to change based on the form of entertainment provided. While middle-class adult males are more likely to become aggressive at sporting events, young adolescent girls may exhibit similar behaviors at a boy-band concert.

The forms of violence outlined above can take place between spectators and others in and around the venue. Violence can occur between the following:

- Two or more spectators, or groups of spectators
- Spectators and entertainers—entertainers include those engaged in competition, coaches, referees, and performers
- Spectators and stadium personnel—personnel include security as well as general employees
- Spectators and the venue—the venue includes all physical structures and properties, both permanent and temporary (e.g., vehicles), present during the event.

You can generally classify spectator violence as either spontaneous or organized.[14] Organized violence is very rare in the United States and is seen more often in European sport matches that attract large numbers of hardcore fans from other countries. These fans form "gangs" who attend events intending to cause a disturbance. U.S. events tend to experience more spontaneous violence resulting from an overzealous or intoxicated crowd (e.g., wild dancing in a so-called "mosh pit"). It is important to distinguish between organized and spontaneous violence, since each requires different solutions. Specific factors that contribute to spontaneous spectator violence are explored below.

Factors Contributing to Spectator Violence in Stadiums

Understanding the factors that contribute to problems in your jurisdiction will help you frame your own local analysis questions, determine effectiveness measures, recognize key intervention points, and select appropriate responses.

It is important to recognize the characteristics of each venue, event, and available staff that may increase fan aggression. No single characteristic of these elements can guarantee that violence will or will not occur. However, a combination of poorly designed physical environments, high-energy events, and poorly trained or inexperienced staff will increase the likelihood of spectator violence.

Local analysis may reveal unique characteristics of your venue, event, or staff that facilitate violence. Your analysis should be based on the spectator violence triangle (Figure 1) that incorporates these major elements. This triangle is a modification of the widely used problem analysis triangle (see www.popcenter.org for a description). The relative importance of each side of the triangle will vary from event to event. Fixing problematic characteristics on any one side of the triangle may reduce the likelihood of spectator violence. Fixing more than one side should give greater assurance that your preventive efforts will work.

Figure 1 also lists specific characteristics of venues, events, and staff found to be related to higher levels of spectator violence in stadiums. While some of these factors may be difficult or impossible to change, it is important to understand how each contributes to the likelihood of aggression. Each of these is described next.

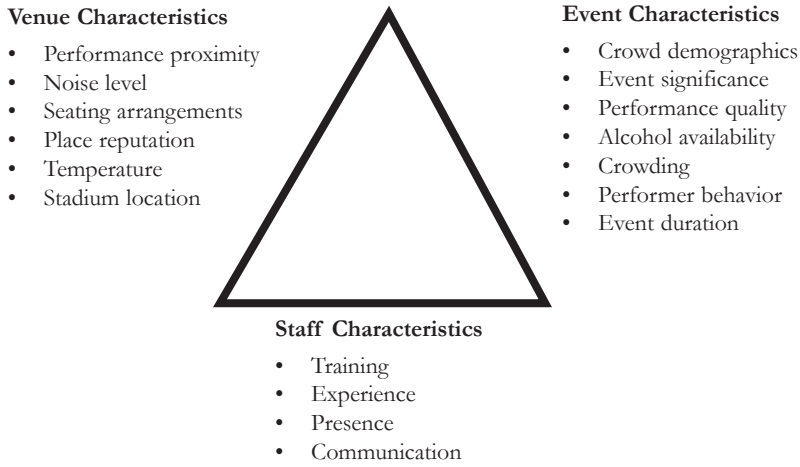

Figure 1. Spectator violence triangle and specific causes of spectator violence.

Venue Characteristics

There are more than 360 sports stadiums and arenas in the United States,[15] and while some share similar features, each is unique. Research and analysis of publicized incidents suggest that specific characteristics of stadiums and arenas are associated with higher levels of spectator violence. Five of these features are discussed below.

Performance proximity. Violence between spectators and entertainers is more likely to occur when there is less physical distance between them. Those in the front row of concerts are better able to reach out and grab performers,[16] fans with courtside seats can stretch their legs to trip players,[17] and fans can throw objects or jump onto a baseball field or into a hockey penalty box to assault players, coaches, or referees.[18] Verbal insults and other aggressive behavior by spectators close to the action can also prompt retaliatory behavior from entertainers who feel threatened or disrespected.[19]

Noise level. Researchers have found that extreme noise levels increase the likelihood of interpersonal aggression.[20] This implies that spectator violence is more likely to be a concern at very loud concerts or for those who are closer to amplification systems. It has also been suggested that noise meters, used to indicate the crowd's volume and encourage spectators to yell and cheer more loudly at sporting events, may encourage obnoxious behaviors that set the stage for spectator aggression.[21]

Seating arrangements. One of the most consistent findings regarding higher levels of aggression in stadiums relates to the type of seating available to spectators. Individual seats are related to lower violence levels, while general admission seating that requires spectators to stand, often referred to as festival seating, generates higher violence levels.[22] While all crowds eventually become mobile, when entering and exiting the stadium, it appears that assigned seating helps maintain order during the event. When seats are not assigned, enthusiastic fans will try to push their way toward the stage, and crush those ahead of them.[23] Empty spaces without seats can encourage moshing or provide places to start bonfires. However, individual seats do not guarantee a violence-free event. People who move into unoccupied seats or toward railings can instigate aggression if they refuse to move when the ticket holder arrives or if they block the view of those seated directly behind access barriers.[24] In addition, temporary seats not bolted to the floor can become weapons.

Place reputation. Some places experience more violence than others. Some banks are robbed more. Some bars experience more fights between patrons. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that some stadiums experience more violence than others. If left unaddressed, routine violence at a particular venue may contribute to a negative reputation or promote the view that violence is tolerated, or even

expected, at the location. Stadiums where conflict is seen as routine or customary may attract people looking to cause trouble or encourage violent behavior among average spectators.[25] Venues hosting high-profile events that receive intensive media coverage can also attract people who will act aggressively to see themselves on television or their name in print.[26]

Temperature. Studies have found a positive relationship between heat and both spectator and performer aggression. As the temperature increases in stadiums and arenas, so does the likelihood of violence.[27] Spectators may also drink more alcohol to "warm up" in cold weather conditions, thus increasing the likelihood of aggressive behavior. Enclosed venues have an advantage over open-air venues since you can regulate the facility's internal temperature to avoid extreme temperatures.

Stadium location. Residents often oppose the construction of new stadiums because they fear increased violence, noise, litter, and parking troubles that will drive down residential property values.[28] While these facilities' potential negative impact is often discussed, the surrounding community's impact on stadium events is not. Stadiums in inner cities may face different problems from stadiums in suburban neighborhoods. For example, an inner-city facility is more likely to experience problems with aggressive panhandling than a suburban facility. It is important to consider how existing community problems may impact the likelihood of violence at stadium events.

Event Characteristics

Every event brings with it a unique set of circumstances. A different collection of individual fans, differing numbers of attendees, and anticipated or unanticipated outcomes are just a few of the factors that vary across events, even when the setting remains constant. Below we discuss six event characteristics that have been previously associated with spectator violence in stadiums.

Crowd demographics. As mentioned previously, males are more likely to engage in violent behaviors. Acts that tend to attract more males, particularly younger males, are more likely to generate violence than acts that draw demographically mixed crowds. Event organizers reduced violence at the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix by promoting the event as a family experience.[29] Obviously, one would expect less violence at a Barry Manilow concert than at a punk or metal rock music concert. Sporting events with less "away team" supporters' involvement are less likely to produce violent incidents. European soccer matches experience serious spectator aggression when some fans "invade the pitch" (charge the playing field); fans of one team rush toward fans of the other team in the stands. Research also suggests that venues hosting teams with highly dedicated fans are also more likely to experience spectator violence.[30]

Event significance. An event considered significant can provoke aggression among spectators.[31] For example, an important victory can produce celebratory rioting within the stadium or in adjacent parking lots or neighborhoods.[32] An increase in emergency room visits has been documented following celebratory victories after highly charged games.[33] Other research has shown that violence is more likely to occur at games where the teams have played each other previously in the same season, and when intradivisional rivals are playing.[34]

Performance quality. Spectators may be more likely to act out if their team performs poorly.[35] Aggression in sports fans has been associated with team performances that did not live up to spectator expectations.[36] Crowds have been known to verbally taunt and throw objects at bad concert performers. Audience members at Weird Al Yankovic's first concert threw objects at him and his band and booed loudly until they left the stage.[37]

Alcohol availability. Special considerations must be made if event organizers decide to make alcohol available at a particular event. There is a large body of research that suggests intoxication is related to aggressive behavior. While drinking does not "drive" people to act violently, alcohol can impair the judgment of people who are predisposed to violent behavior. Excessive drinking can cause people to act overconfidently and carelessly, lose awareness of their surroundings, and react violently to people they perceive as offensive.[38] Studies of college students have found a link between sports, binge drinking, and problems associated with high intoxication levels.[39] In addition, if people drink alcohol from glass bottles, they can become weapons in an altercation.

Crowding. Another factor contributing to increased levels of spectator aggression is crowding.[40] Crowding increases the likelihood of violence for a variety of reasons: it limits mobility, increases the likelihood of unwanted physical contact between spectators, and increases wait times for entry, purchases, and exiting. A major difference between British and North American soccer is that North American venues are generally less crowded.[41] Larger crowds are also theoretically more likely to have more people willing to engage in violent behaviors.

Michael Scott

Crowding increases the likelihood of violence because it limits mobility, increases the likelihood of unwanted contact between spectators and increases wait times for entry, purchases, and exit.

Performer behavior. An event's performers can influence spectators' behavior.[42] Artists' failure to perform has incited riots.[43] Violence and looting at the Woodstock 1999 concert began during Limp Bizkit's performance of the song "Break Stuff."[44] Research has found that spectator violence commonly follows player violence during soccer and football games, and to a lesser degree, during baseball and hockey games.[45] Other studies suggest that player fights can attract people who are more likely to engage in and escalate spectator aggression.[46]

Event duration. A stadium event's actual duration is always longer than the time allotted for it. The assembly and dispersal process can significantly lengthen the time of larger and more popular events and thus allow more time for spectators to engage in violent behaviors. Pre- and post-event socialization (e.g., tailgating) is an integral part of many sporting and concert events, and spectators often drink large quantities of alcohol during that time. A variety of serious

injuries, including death, have occurred during tailgating activities at recent events.[47] Failure to develop violence prevention strategies that target pre- and post-game activities can increase the likelihood of spectator violence.

Staff Characteristics

Stadium and arena personnel, including security and others working at the event, are a critical component of any strategy designed to reduce spectator violence. There are four important characteristics of stadium personnel that have been linked to spectator violence: training, experience, presence, and communication. In general, venues that employ staff with little training and experience, fail to provide an adequate number of personnel, and do not provide personnel with clear directives and lines of communication are more likely to experience problems with spectator violence. We discuss each factor below.

Training. Security and other employees can reduce or increase spectator frustration and aggression. Personnel are often asked to perform duties that can instigate fan violence; for example, personnel must manage crowded parking environments, confiscate contraband from spectators as they enter the venue, ensure that fans are sitting in their assigned seats, and manage crowds that form to purchase items or receive free promotional materials (e.g., free memorabilia on fan-appreciation night).[48] Private-sector security personnel can be less effective if they do not receive adequate training on how to manage these situations,[49] particularly if they are hired to police a single event at an unfamiliar venue. Police personnel typically have experience dealing with disorderly people, but need specialized training that draws their attention to potential points of conflict at the venue. If alcohol is served, staff should be trained to recognize intoxication, correctly check identification, and handle inebriated fans.[50]

Experience. Too many inexperienced staff may lessen the effectiveness of event management strategies. Inexperienced staff who cannot identify potential threats and respond to them appropriately may not only allow spectator violence to occur, but also instigate or escalate violent situations.[51] One of the most famous incidents of violence between fans and inexperienced security occurred at California Altamont Speedway when the Rolling Stones hired a local Hells Angels chapter to provide security for a free concert. An 18-year-old female flashed a gun and was stabbed to death by a Hells Angels member.[52] Even with training, inexperienced personnel may become tense or agitated in high-stress situations. Spectators report that challenging or negative police attitudes have contributed to fan violence incidents.[53]

Presence. Staff presence, particularly that of security personnel, influences fan violence in several ways. First, an adequate number of staff must be present to secure the event. The multiple functions of a venue require that security be present in a number of locations to handle traffic enforcement, entry points, assigned seating, stage or field security, performers' safety as they move throughout the venue, and so forth.[54]

Second, event planners must balance the need for visible security as a deterrent with the problem of aggression that the presence of too many uniformed officers may instigate.[55] There are several types of people who may act to control spectator behavior,[56] including the following:

- Friends or relatives at the event may have a calming effect or directly intervene to pacify the spectator if he or she gets aggressive
- Police or private-contract security who are directly tasked with monitoring and controlling spectator behavior can respond to the incident

- Stadium staff assigned to nonsecurity functions (e.g., ushers, ticket-takers, vendors) can directly intervene or call for security
- Other spectators can act as peacemakers or alert security if violence occurs.

However, our discussion of the costs and benefits associated with the presence of security staff relates most directly to police and private-contract security who wear uniforms or other attire that signifies their role as law enforcers.

Beyond the simple presence of security staff, the overpolicing of an event can increase spectator violence. Searching every vehicle, conducting pat downs, requiring spectators to walk through metal detectors, and using police dogs, while necessary at only a few high-risk events, can cause excessive delays, can increase frustration and worry, and may contribute to spectator violence.[57]

Finally, the type of interaction that takes place between spectators and staff can influence fan violence. Low levels of positive interpersonal interaction between security and fans have been linked to higher levels of spectator misbehavior.[58] Encouraging positive interactions (e.g., disarming angry spectators by using humor) can help staff develop rapport with the crowd and maintain order.[59]

Communication. Almost every study on maintaining stadium order stresses the importance of an effective command post. A clear chain of command must be established so that staff performing various functions can both receive orders to act and report potential or immediate threats. Communication breakdowns during post-Super Bowl celebrations in Boston have been blamed for extensive property damage, serious injuries, and one death.[60] Commanders must be able to effectively collect and analyze intelligence relayed from the field.[61] Staff also should be clear about their assigned roles and what to do in emergency situations to avoid creating a chaotic atmosphere.

Understanding Your Local Problem

The summary of what is known about spectator violence in stadiums provides a very general overview. To understand your local spectator violence problem, you must combine this general knowledge with specific facts describing your local conditions. Using the spectator violence triangle as a framework for problem analysis, you may find other factors related to violence unique to the stadiums, event types, or staff used in your jurisdiction. Carefully analyzing your local problem will help you design an effective response strategy that fits your specific needs.

Stakeholders

In addition to criminal justice agencies, the following groups have an interest in the problem of spectator violence in stadiums, and you should consult them when gathering information about the problem and responding to it.

Traffic and transportation agencies. Local traffic and transportation agencies are critical partners in understanding and addressing the problem of spectator violence. These agencies can change or add traffic signs, redirect or restrict traffic flow, alter traffic-light timing to reduce congestion, and change when public transportation is available to fans. For example, an agency can schedule public transportation to pick up fans immediately after an event ends, to reduce loitering.

Private service companies. Private companies associated with the venue may be responsible for providing services such as selling food and beverages, staffing and training ushers, providing additional security, and managing souvenir sales. Staff employed through these companies may have firsthand knowledge of factors that tend to instigate spectator violence.

EMS providers, ambulance services, local hospitals. Medical personnel often handle the aftermath of spectator violence and may recognize factors that contribute to such events. These agencies may be able to provide data to use in your problem analysis. As experts in injury prevention, they can also be useful advocates to implement responses to your local problem.

Fire services. Local fire department personnel often attend stadium events. In addition to knowledge gained through firsthand experience at the venue, they may be aware of structural features that may serve to increase crowd frustration or pose safety hazards.

Event promoters, performers. Event promoters and performers can share information concerning the characteristics of the crowds they are likely to draw. They may be able to estimate the number of spectators they expect to attract to the event. They can also describe spectator behaviors experienced during prior similar events.

Local government officials. The mayor, city council, city manager, and local prosecutors and judges may know of city ordinances you can use to regulate event activities. They may also know of instances when these ordinances have been successfully (or unsuccessfully) used in the past. Local government officials can also gather the resources necessary to implement costly responses.

Stadium owners and managers. Stadium owners and managers are critical partners in planning violence prevention strategies. These people are ultimately responsible for the safety of those who use their properties. They can implement necessary changes to the property and require that event promoters adjust staffing levels. They can require that particular violence-reduction strategies be used at individual

events. These restrictions can be placed in the contractual agreements performers and their promoters and managers must sign. Owners and managers may also be able to provide data on the effectiveness of previous violence-reduction strategies or descriptions of previous incidents.

Insurance companies. Since insurance companies have an interest in reducing the number of claims associated with their insured properties, they may be willing to help develop and fund violence-reduction strategies. You can also use them to pressure uncooperative owners and managers to respond to police requests.

The community. Research suggests that host communities experience more assaults, vandalism, and disorderly conduct on event days.[62] Residents and business owners in neighborhoods adjacent to the event can help to identify and respond to potential problems. These individuals may provide information about activities that often lead to aggression (e.g., scalping of fake tickets, illegal parking, unlawful vending that disrupts local business, disorderly or destructive behavior by spectators who park off stadium property). They can also act as a "force multiplier" by reporting such behavior to police, who can intervene before the problem escalates.

Asking the Right Questions

Below is a list of questions you should ask to better understand your stadium spectator violence problem. The answers to these questions will help you choose the most appropriate responses and develop an effective strategy to reduce incidents of spectator violence in your local stadiums.

Incidents

- How many incidents of spectator violence occur in your stadium or arena of interest? Be aware that, as with most crime, witnesses may not report many violent incidents, particularly minor incidents, which could indicate future trouble if left unaddressed.
- What types of spectator violence (i.e., verbal, gesturing, missile throwing, swarming, property destruction, physical) occur most frequently?
- What percentage of violence is between spectators, spectators and entertainers, spectators and stadium staff, and spectators and the venue?
- What are the general circumstances surrounding spectator violence (e.g., are the spectators drunk, do spectators use items sold in or brought to the stadium as weapons or missiles, what other factors escalate the violence)?
- How concerned are the various stakeholders with the problem of spectator violence? This information can be used to build partnerships and organize resources.
- Does the problem contribute to any other problems (e.g., disorder or riots spilling into nearby neighborhoods)?
- How long has spectator violence been a problem at the particular stadium? Are there other similar venues that do not generate the same level of spectator aggression? What is different about these venues?
- Are there particular teams or performers associated with more spectator violence?

Locations/Times

- Where does spectator violence occur in the stadium? Does it occur close to the stage/field, at entry or exit points, in lines, in hallways or staircases, in parking areas, or in particular seating sections?
- When does spectator violence most frequently occur (e.g., at the beginning, middle, or end of the event)?
- Are there certain times of day when incidents of spectator violence increase more frequently (e.g., in the morning, afternoon, evening, or late-evening/early-morning hours)?

Victims

- Who are the victims of spectator violence? If people target some spectators more frequently, do particular demographic patterns (e.g., sex, age, team affiliation) exist among the victims?
- What were the victims doing before the spectator violence (e.g., waiting in line, standing in their seats, cheering for their team, trying to control unruly spectators)?
- Are the victims regulars at the venue, or infrequent guests?
- How serious are the injuries resulting from spectator violence? Are they minor or do they tend to require medical attention? Keep in mind that many victims may not report minor injuries.

Venue Characteristics

- How close are the spectators to the performers? What physical barriers separate spectators from entertainers? (Barriers can include guardrails, moats, stage elevation, and so forth).
- Does the stadium facilitate pedestrian movement? How wide are the aisles and passageways relative to the number of spectators using them? Are there signs providing directions to important locations and people (e.g., seating sections, restrooms, food and beverage stands, security staff)?
- Are points of interest (e.g., souvenir shops and food/beverage distributors) appropriately scattered throughout the venue, or are they lumped together in one or a few locations?
- Are places where people are expected to wait in line clearly marked? Do these lines block other pedestrian flow?
- Do restrooms, drinking fountains, food and beverage stands, and other service areas spectators use become overcrowded? Are these areas staffed appropriately and kept clean and orderly?
- What type of seating is provided to spectators (e.g., festival seating, benches, individual seats)?
- Do the access points facilitate the entry and dispersal process? Do enough of these points exist to keep congestion to a minimum but still allow staff to maintain a secure perimeter?
- Does the venue's physical structure need repair? For instance, can people rip seats up from the floor and throw them?

- What season or type of weather is associated with incidents of spectator aggression?
- What is the stadium's policy on alcohol consumption? Can spectators bring alcohol in? What types of containers can spectators use? If the arena sells alcohol, at what price and in what size containers does it do so?

Current and Previous Responses

- What type of security, other than traditional law enforcement, is present during stadium events?
- When violence occurs, which workers are usually the first to respond to the incident (e.g., ushers, private security, medical personnel, police)?
- What does a spectator have to do to generate a response from security? For example, does security tolerate verbal taunts, foul language, or obscene gestures?
- Do police wait until a violent incident occurs before becoming proactive at an event?
- What is the standard response to signs of fan aggression?
- Are fans notified of potential risks and costs associated with engaging in inappropriate and violent behaviors?
- What type of training does staff have to deal with disruptive or aggressive spectators?
- What restrictions have been used to try and prevent spectator violence in the past? For instance, do personnel search bags before entry? Is staff asked to search for and confiscate particular illicit drugs? Have persistent troublemakers been banned from the stadium? Is the sale of alcohol limited (e.g., service stops before the end of the event, there is a one-drink limit per customer)?

Measuring Your Effectiveness

Measurement allows you to determine to what degree your efforts have succeeded, and suggests how you might modify your responses if they are not producing the intended results. You should take measures of your problem *before* you implement responses, to determine how serious the problem is, and *after* you implement them, to determine whether they have been effective. You should take all measures in both the target area and the surrounding area. For more detailed guidance on measuring effectiveness, see the Problem-Solving Tools guide, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers*.

The following are potentially useful measures of the effectiveness of responses to spectator violence in stadiums:

- Fewer violent incidents between spectators
- Fewer violent incidents between spectators and entertainers
- Fewer violent incidents between spectators and stadium personnel
- Fewer violent incidents where spectators damage the stadium
- Reduced seriousness of injuries (e.g., fewer injuries requiring medical attention)
- Fewer complaints about spectator behavior received by security
- Fewer complaints about spectator behavior received by other stadium staff
- Fewer items confiscated at the stadium;
- Fewer incidents of refusing alcohol to inebriated spectators
- Fewer spectator ejections from the stadium
- Improved perceptions of safety by spectators, entertainers, and stadium personnel.

Responses to the Problem of Spectator Violence in Stadiums

Your analysis of your local problem should give you a better understanding of the factors contributing to it. Once you have analyzed your local problem and established a baseline for measuring effectiveness, you should consider possible responses to address the problem.

The following responses provide ideas for addressing your particular stadium spectator violence problem. These strategies are drawn from a variety of research studies, analyses of past spectator violence incidents, and police reports. Several of these responses may be applicable to your community's problem. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis of your local conditions. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving such a problem. Do not limit yourself to considering what police alone can do: carefully consider whether others in your community share responsibility for the problem and can help police better respond to it. In some cases, you may need to shift the responsibility to those who can implement more-effective responses. For example, it might be that redesigning sections of the stadium may be the most effective response. In such a circumstance, nonpolice public agencies and private organizations will have to do most of the work in carrying out the response. (For more detailed information on shifting and sharing responsibility, see Response Guide No. 3, *Shifting and Sharing Responsibility for Public Safety Problems*.)

General Considerations for an Effective Response Strategy

Before reviewing specific responses to spectator violence, we offer the following general considerations. These will help you develop and implement an effective response strategy.

If we have learned anything from the extreme accounts of spectator violence in Europe, it is that *prevention* is superior to the most effective *response* after fan violence begins. Most experts agree that strategies should emphasize prevention and never confrontation.[63] Successful violence-reduction strategies in England have stressed deterrence and opportunity reduction.[64]

It is also important to note that recent findings on crowd behavior suggest that police will instigate or escalate violence if they treat large groups of people as homogenous entities. Assuming that all fans are potentially dangerous will lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.[65] Gatherings or crowds do not drive people mad or make them lose control. People at gatherings have a wide variety of personal agendas, and typically only a small minority of people are willing to engage in violent behaviors.[66]

After any stadium event, you should convene an after-action meeting that includes representatives of the police and other involved organizations. This will allow you to exchange information about what worked and what strategies should be modified. You can use this meeting to develop an after-action report. The after-action report should include qualitative information gathered in the meeting, as well as quantitative measures of spectator violence-prevention outcomes. You should then use this information to improve your local strategy for dealing with spectator violence in stadiums.

Specific Responses to Spectator Violence in Stadiums

The following are specific responses to spectator violence in stadiums. Some evaluation research studies directly examine the problem of spectator violence. Many of these analyses, however, report mixed results regarding the effectiveness of certain responses. And researchers have not evaluated most responses. For these reasons, many of the following responses are suggested because of their *potential* effectiveness for *particular* circumstances, rather than for *proven* effectiveness or widespread applicability. It is important that you continually evaluate your response to assess its impact in your particular community. To facilitate your analysis of your problem and strategy, the responses are organized based on the three elements of the spectator violence triangle introduced earlier in this guide: venue-, event-, and staff-related interventions.

Venue

1. **Creating access barriers.** It is necessary to prevent spectators from gaining access to backstage or performance areas, seating areas to which they are not assigned, and media rooms, and to prevent entrance of those who do not have tickets to the event. Some European countries have designed moats around soccer fields to prevent fans from interfering with game play; some have even placed crocodiles in these pits.[67] Such extreme measures are generally unnecessary (or permissible) in the United States. Simple physical (e.g., gates, fences) and social (e.g., ushers, security) barriers are usually sufficient to prevent access to restricted locations. However, you should choose the locations and barrier types cautiously. An inappropriately placed barrier may encourage people to climb or sit on the railings, or people may use it as a weapon if it is not properly secured.

2. **Providing adequate facilities and proper placement.** Enough toilets should be made available to prevent long lines and disputes between distressed spectators. Event planners need to consider the number of expected attendees and the length of the event.[68] Proper facility layout (e.g., restrooms available in multiple places around the arena) is also critical.[69] Concentrations of restrooms, food and beverage vendors, or souvenir stands can result in massive crowds forming in small spaces and increase the likelihood of violence.

3. **Strategically placing stages, sound equipment, and screens.** Places where the action can be clearly seen and heard naturally draw people to them. Stadium personnel can strategically place stages, sound systems, and large video screens to control gatherings within the crowd.[70] Multiple sound systems and video screens can help break up large crowds. At larger events, more screens and larger stages can help to discourage people from pushing toward the stage through the field to get a better view.

4. **Providing adequate and nearby parking.** People who are forced to walk long distances to arrive at their mode of transportation may engage in destructive behaviors along the way; particularly after a highly charged event and if there is little management along the route to their destination. Multiple entry and exit points that lead spectators directly to their vehicles or other public transportation will help to reduce the likelihood of aggressive behavior.

5. **Posting signs.** For spectators, properly placed and visible signs can serve to inform (e.g., exit only), warn (e.g., sidewalk becomes slippery in inclement weather), instruct (e.g., only one beer per paying customer), and guide (e.g., restrooms behind snack bar).[71] When used properly, signs can reduce the need for staff and can reduce conflict due to frustration or confusion. Signs should be easily readable and high enough that they can be seen over a crowd.

6. **Changing venues for "high-risk" events.** When the stakes are high, it may be beneficial to change locations or switch between locations until an event or series of events is completed.[72] For football fans, the Super Bowl is typically played at an "away" stadium for both participating teams.[73] This practice can discourage fans from rushing the field to celebrate victories or to act aggressively against members of the winning (or losing) team. Baseball fans take turns watching their teams play home games during the World Series to give fans equal access to the action (despite the travel costs associated with moving players and coaches between cities). This technique does not always prevent violence, as witnessed in the aftermath of the Red Sox victory in 2004.

7. **Establishing processing and holding areas for spectators who are arrested or refuse to leave the premises.** When police arrest violent fans or remove them from the stands, it is important to have a designated and secure area to separate them from the rest of the spectators. This can prevent them from provoking other crowd members while awaiting transportation.[74] Stadiums hosting the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles and Baltimore Ravens have successfully used makeshift jail cells and courtrooms.[75]

8. **Redesigning stadium features that facilitate violence.** Some stadiums have been remodeled to include protective tunnels and seating areas for performers and officials. Others have created "family" enclosures to separate vulnerable populations from rowdy fans.[76] Italian soccer stadiums have been fitted with Plexiglas barriers or fences to separate fans from the field and players.[77] Other stadiums in Europe have separate seating areas for fans of opposing teams. You may consider structural changes to your stadium if your analysis finds that violence repeatedly occurs in a particular location there.

9. **Providing sectioned and personal seating.** It was mentioned previously that personal seating can reduce the likelihood of spectator violence. Personal seating can further reduce violence if the seating is segregated into well-defined areas. Breaking crowds down into smaller groups helps to facilitate crowd control.[78] This seating arrangement can also help to facilitate quick isolation and removal of violent spectators, with minimal disruption to other spectators' experience.

Event

10. **Restricting alcohol sales.** Most stadiums generally do not allow fans to bring their own alcohol to events. Still, some spectators will pay the high alcohol prices at U.S. stadium events and get drunk. To avoid problems associated with spectator intoxication, security should be positioned near alcohol vendors, should refuse entry and service to intoxicated spectators, and should establish a purchase limit.[79] Complete bans are usually unnecessary, unless a particular event carries a long history of serious violence.[80] The NBA recently issued guidelines limiting the size and number of beers that can be sold at games in an attempt to prevent spectator misconduct.[81] Most stadiums have a one- or two-drink-per-customer policy and stop selling alcohol before the game ends (e.g., at the end of the seventh inning of a baseball game or the third quarter of a football game) to prevent intoxication and/or allow fans to sober up before leaving. Also, serving beer in plastic cups instead of glass containers and removing bottle caps can prevent drink containers from becoming weapons. See, in this series, the guides titled *Assaults in and Around Bars* and *Underage Drinking* for more strategies to reduce alcohol consumption.

11. **Removing disruptive spectators.** Fans may have a right to cheer and shout—certainly event promoters encourage such behavior—but more and more stadiums are prohibiting incessant heckling.[82] Cincinnati Bengals fans can now call a hotline (381-JERK) on their cell phones to report aggressive spectators or those who use excessive foul language, and to request staff intervention.[83] Removing and isolating aggressive spectators can prevent relatively minor incidents from escalating into more-serious forms of violence.

12. **Refusing entrance to known troublemakers and inebriated spectators**. Stadiums can ban spectators who engage in serious violence or disruptive behavior from the premises for the rest of the event, the rest of the season, or for life.[84] Some stadiums routinely confiscate or suspend season tickets belonging to violent spectators.[85] To prevent violent incidents, security should refuse entry to the stadium to known and potential troublemakers (e.g., highly intoxicated people).[86] Students who have been ejected from University of Wisconsin-Madison football games have been required to pass a Breathalyzer test before being granted access to the college's stadium.[87]

Michael Scott

Security checks of spectator's bags, pockets and jackets reduce the likelihood that potential weapons will be brought into stadiums.

13. **Screening items brought into the stadium.** The risk of serious injury can be lessened if security confiscates potential weapons from spectators before they enter the stadium. Few stadiums still allow beverages to be served in glass containers, but spectators can break and use their own beer bottles as weapons (or otherwise produce a safety hazard). Security should check spectators' bags, pockets, and jackets through hand searches (i.e., pat downs), metal detectors, or X-ray machines.[88]

14. **Reducing situational instigators of violence.** Reducing noise and heat levels can reduce the risk of spectator violence. However, you should identify and address other situational instigators. For instance, if students wear T-shirts bearing obscene messages, University of Maryland ushers will trade socially acceptable T-shirts for them. The university also prohibits the band from playing songs that encourage fans to shout vulgarities.[89] Personnel should also plan for unexpected weather, such as thunderstorms that may send a crowd running for shelter and encourage conflicts.[90]

15. **Controlling the dispersal process.** Mass exodus from a venue sets the stage for crowded conditions and spectator violence. Postgame events, such as autograph signings, help to stagger the dispersal process. The University of Wisconsin marching band began performing a postgame show known as the Fifth Quarter. This performance attracts a significant number of fans and reduces the number of people leaving the stadium at the same time. Fifty percent or more of crowds attending Saturday night baseball games at Dolphin Stadium stay after the game to watch a free concert and fireworks.[91] Strategic dispersal times (e.g., not during rush hour) may also help to prevent traffic congestion and related accidents.[92]

16. **Requiring permits and adherence to entertainment ordinances**. The permit review process can help to deny access to those wishing to hold potentially volatile events, or to put restrictions on these high-risk events.[93] Permits may require adherence to noise-level requirements, demand a particular number of staff, or place restrictions on the number of attendees. Police may use entertainment ordinances to penalize event organizers or performers who fail to adhere to local permit laws and other city requirements.[94]

17. **Advertising penalties for violent behavior.** Media coverage and other campaigns aimed at educating both spectators and performers about sanctions associated with aggressive behavior may deter such behavior.[95] Fans have been sentenced to jail and forced to pay fines for pouring beer on players. Players have been sanctioned for rough contact or overexuberant celebrations after scoring, either through fines or game penalties. Awareness of consequences may reduce incidents or the seriousness of incidents when they do occur. The University of Wisconsin ended body passing at football games in the 1970s by announcing on the PA system that this behavior could constitute fourth-degree sexual assault (groping of women) and making some arrests. In recent efforts to prevent trash-throwing at opposing players, the University of Alabama notified students that a first offense would result in losing ticket privileges to three consecutive games; a second offense would result in losing ticket privileges indefinitely for that particular sport; and a third offense would result in losing ticket privileges indefinitely for *all* sporting events.[96]

18. **Encouraging marketing to gender- and age-diverse crowds.** We have already discussed the fact that younger males are more likely to engage in violent behavior. In fact, most male spectators in Finland reported that they would watch (61.1%), encourage (4.7%), or join in (2.7%) if a fight broke out.[97] Promoting the attendance of more "peacemakers" by portraying the event as a family experience may help to reduce the likelihood of spectator violence. As noted previously, this tactic proved successful for organizers of the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix.[98] Most sporting events provide continual entertainment (e.g., dancing mascots, synchronized clapping and singing, shooting T-shirts into the stands), leaving very little time that something interesting or entertaining isn't happening. This keeps fans continually occupied and makes what might otherwise be tedious events attractive to families with young children. So, even if you do not much care for the sport, the event is fun.

Staff

19. **Establishing an effective command post.** Interested parties should design a command post to quickly and efficiently relay information between various groups (e.g., police officers; medical, fire, and stadium personnel; event organizers).[99] This control/command center will be most effective if it is centrally located and a representative from each group is present. It should also be secure from potential hazards (e.g., fires, riots).[100] An experienced crowd observer placed in this centralized location can monitor camera images or directly view the crowd and spot potential threats before they become actual problems.[101] Plainclothes officers can also pass along intelligence to the central command post and call for a uniformed presence, if necessary.[102]

20. **Training staff to respond appropriately.** No two crowds are exactly the same. Therefore, the tactics used to prevent spectator violence must be flexible. Police must understand spectator behavior to avoid pitting them against those who are working to maintain order.[103] Proactive contact with spectators can help police to accomplish this task. Officers should recognize when to intervene and when just to let the crowd tire itself out.[104] In addition, all staff must fully comprehend their responsibilities and be familiar with contingency plans if preventive efforts fail.[105] Some departments and officers within departments have more experience and see the prevention of spectator violence as just another part of their everyday duties; others may require more extensive training.[106] Practice exercises can help inexperienced staff better cope with extreme spectator aggression and help organizers identify problems with communication and staffing levels.[107]

21. **Using different security "levels."** You can use other staff, besides uniformed officers, to prevent spectator violence. You can train ushers or "stewards," vendors, medical personnel, other stadium personnel (e.g., janitors), and plainclothes "place managers" to control spectator behavior. Directions from nonuniformed personnel can reduce the tensions that the presence of many uniformed officers may instigate.[108] Using other personnel can also reduce costs, since they tend to be paid less than sworn officers. Finally, using women or older staff as frontline personnel may display a less threatening security presence and reduce tensions between fans and security.

22. **Increasing the visibility of security.** While an overabundance of uniformed officers may not be necessary, some level of visibility can provide a deterrent effect. Some event organizers have prevented violence by positioning more uniformed officers at entrances (as a show of force) and decreasing their presence as people move into the event.[109] Increased visibility may be particularly effective at high-risk events, but officers should remain cognizant of the effect their appearance may have on crowd behavior.[110]

Michael Scott

While an overabundance of uniformed officers may not be necessary, some level of visibility can provide a deterrent effect.

23. **Incorporating technology.** CCTV (closed-circuit television) cameras and nonlethal weapons can be useful crowd-monitoring and control devices.[111] Cameras reduce the number of personnel needed to monitor large crowds and direct personnel to places where assistance may be needed. Police can use nonlethal weapons to immobilize extremely violent spectators and reduce the likelihood of serious injury or death to the spectators and others nearby. However, "nonlethal" weapons can be deadly, as witnessed by Boston police who used pepper spray balls

to subdue a crowd outside of Fenway Park. A 21-year-old college student was struck in the eye by a pepper ball and was killed.[112] Use of nonlethal weapons requires specialized training, and police should use them only when other strategies have failed.

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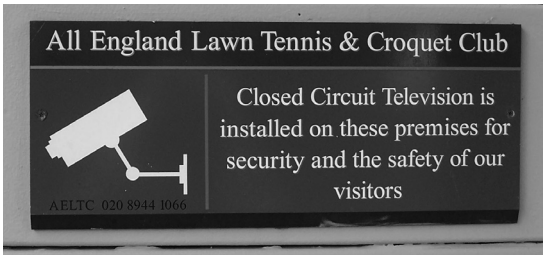


Cameras can reduce the number of persons needed to monitor large crowds and direct personnel to places where assistance may be needed.

Responses With Limited Effectiveness

24. **Relying on reactive tactics.** Although it is outside the scope of this guide, it is necessary to develop a detailed contingency plan to respond to spectators or groups of spectators who become violent. However, these tactics will not prevent violence and can often serve to escalate negative situations.

25. **Presenting extreme shows of force.** While some police visibility can work as a deterrent to spectator violence, excessive shows of force can create a militaristic and highly hostile atmosphere. Police in riot gear with face shields and batons are usually not necessary to address officer safety concerns, and can stunt efforts to develop a positive rapport with event attendees.[113]

26. **Segregating fans.** Segregating fans from opposing teams has worked to reduce spectator violence in Europe.[114] However, since North American game locations are more widespread, fewer "away" team fans usually attend games; thus special seating isn't normally justified.

Appendix A: Summary of Responses to Spectator Violence in Stadiums

The table below summarizes the responses to abandoned vehicles, the mechanism by which they are intended to work, the conditions under which they ought to work best, and some factors you should consider before implementing a particular response. It is critical that you tailor responses to local circumstances, and that you can justify each response based on reliable analysis. In most cases, an effective strategy will involve implementing several different responses. Law enforcement responses alone are seldom effective in reducing or solving the problem.

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
Venue					
1	25	Creating access barriers	Prevents fans from interfering with performances and protects both performers and spectators	…fans cannot easily overcome barriers	The barriers should not reduce visibility or cause safety hazards—they can become death traps if a stampede or similar event occurs, so barriers should be constructed to give way safely under extreme pressure
2	26	Providing adequate facilities and proper placement	Reduces long lines and crowding	…facilities are equally accessible to all spectators	Reducing beverage lines could increase alcohol consumption

Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
3	26	Strategically placing stages, sound equipment, and screens	Helps to break up larger crowds and maintain seating assignments	…spectators can easily view the stages and screens from their assigned seats	More sound systems may increase volume levels and noise-related frustrations
4	26	Providing adequate and nearby parking	Reduces opportunities to engage in violent behaviors	…multiple entry and exit points exist	Large parking areas provide opportunities for car theft and vandalism. They also create traffic jams and the possibility of conflicts due to frustration at not being able to enter or exit quickly
5	26	Posting signs	Conveys information to spectators to maintain safety and facilitate movement and activities throughout the stadium	…the signs are clearly visible above the crowd but are out of vandals' reach	You may need to have signs printed in other languages, depending on spectator demographics
6	27	Changing venues for "high-risk" events	Creates a "neutral" environment and reduces tensions between fans and away teams	…fans who cannot get to the alternative venue can watch the event on television	Event promoters may lose money if residents near the alternative venue are less interested in attending the event; it does not help to prevent post-event celebrations outside the stadium
7	27	Establishing processing and holding areas for spectators who are arrested or refuse to leave the premises	Provides a place to isolate violent spectators from the rest of the crowd	…other crowd members cannot see or access the areas	You must make arrangements to transfer the spectators to the local jail or courthouse without disrupting the event

Response No	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
8	27	Redesigning stadium features that facilitate violence	Shields possible targets of spectator aggression	…spectator aggression is concentrated in particular places in the stadium	Major renovations can be costly, and owners may not want to invest their resources or shut down their venue to allow these changes
9	28	Providing sectioned and personal seating	Helps to break crowds down into smaller and more-manageable groups, reducing the crowding commonly associated with festival seating	…tickets are sold for each individual seat, and ushers can guide spectators to the appropriate seats to avoid disputes	This can reduce the venue's overall capacity and result in revenue loss
Events					
10	28	Restricting alcohol sales	Reduces intoxication-related violence	…staff are trained to recognize signs of intoxication	Alcohol sales generate revenue, so the venue may have to raise prices to compensate for a decrease in sales; this increases spectators' incentive to arrive intoxicated or to smuggle alcohol into the event
11	29	Removing disruptive spectators	Limits the harm that results from their action and prevents the further instigation of other spectators	…police target only those engaged in disruptive behaviors	Removing spectators may require use of force and can instigate other spectators
12	29	Refusing entrance to known troublemakers and intoxicated spectators	Reduces the pool of people willing to engage in violent behavior at the event	…staff can recognize those who have been banned and the signs of intoxication	Some fans may not show overt signs of intoxication, despite having consumed large quantities of alcohol

Response No	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
13	30	Screening items brought into the stadium	Prevents spectators from bringing in items that they can use as weapons during altercations	…staff can quickly search spectators without delaying entry to the stadium	Female staff may be needed to search female spectators; metal detectors are expensive
14	30	Reducing situational instigators of violence	Eliminates situational factors, both physical and social, that can encourage spectator violence	…police are familiar with a particular stadium's "fan culture" and can identify the emergence of new instigators	It is difficult to control temperatures in open-air stadiums and noise levels in enclosed arenas
15	30	Controlling the dispersal process	Prevents the crowding that results as spectators leave the stadium	…after-event activities attract some, but not all, spectators	After-event activities will require additional staffing or personnel hours
16	31	Requiring permits and adherence to entertainment ordinances	Notifies authorities in advance of upcoming events, sets restrictions and standards for the events, and holds hosts accountable for meeting basic requirements	…city ordinances governing stadium events are already in place	The city council may have to pass new legislation
17	31	Advertising penalties for violent behavior	Deters spectator-related violence	…laws and sanctions for such behaviors are in place, and spectators view the sanctions as credible	Penalties must be severe enough to offset the perceived benefits of engaging in violent behavior
18	32	Encouraging marketing to age- and gender-diverse crowds	Reduces the pool of young adult males	…the event can be marketed as "family friendly"	This may decrease the popularity of some events. If the family groups are in a completely different part of the stadium from where the young men are, then the advantages are lost. Comingling within the venue may be necessary

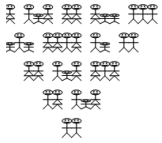
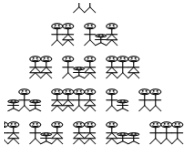
Response No.	Page No.	Response	How It Works	Works Best If…	Considerations
Staff					
19	32	Establishing an effective command post	Aids prevention efforts by facilitating information flow	…representatives from all agencies are stationed at the post	One agency will need to lead the communication efforts
20	33	Training staff to respond appropriately	Prepares staff to deal with the complexities of differing crowd dynamics	…experienced personnel are on-hand to help those with less crowd experience	Some departments may require more extensive training
21	33	Using different security "levels"	Reduces the need for police personnel	…stadium staff members remain consistent from event to event	Police must be available to provide backup if other personnel cannot effectively handle spectator concerns or conflicts
22	34	Increasing the visibility of security	Provides a visual deterrent to those considering violent behavior	…uniformed personnel are placed at strategic points throughout the stadium	Too many uniformed officers may create a hostile atmosphere
23	34	Incorporating technology	Improves surveillance and can eliminate the need for deadly force	…security can monitor cameras from a centralized location	Use of nonlethal weapons requires specialized training and can pose safety risks
Responses With Limited Effectiveness					
24	35	Relying on reactive tactics	Can limit the extent of injury/damage after violence occurs	…violence is an immediate concern	It does little to prevent future violence
25	35	Presenting extreme shows of force	Demonstrates the consequences of behaving violently	…the chances of violence are high and well known	It can increase negative spectator reaction, which may include violence
26	36	Segregating fans	Separates fans of opposing teams	…an equal number of fans will be present for both teams	This may draw attention to the opposing team's supporters, making them more likely to become targets of violence

Appendix B: Developing a Comprehensive Response to Spectator Violence in Stadiums

You should consider each stadium event a five-stage process, comprising (1) the initial planning, (2) the preassembly preparation, (3) the assembly process, (4) the assembled gathering, and (5) the dispersal process. Initial planning involves decisions to schedule the event, including the date, time, and contractual arrangements between the venue and the event organizers. Initial planning can begin months or even years before the event. Preassembly preparations include actions just preceding the event, including carrying out plans created during initial planning, marketing, staffing, training, and other preparation activities. How people sell tickets is particularly important. The assembly process begins the day of the event and involves the movement of people to the stadium, through the stadium, and to their seats. Traffic congestion, parking, admission, and other activities occurring before the event are important during this stage. The assembled gathering is the stage when the event is actually taking place—the teams are playing, the band is performing, and so forth. The final stage is the dispersal process, during which the concern is the safe emptying of the stadium and is the reverse of the assembly process.

You should consider potential problems that may arise at each stage when planning for an event. Once identified, you can address these problems using one of the responses listed in this guide, or you may develop your own unique response. Table 1 lists the five stages. Three examples of potential problems and interventions are listed next to each stage. These illustrate the types of activities that typically occur at each stage—they are not exhaustive lists of problems and interventions.

Table 1
Potential Problems and Interventions During an Event's Five Stages

Stage	Potential Problems	Potential Interventions
Initial Planning	• Decision to host an event where violence is likely to occur • Lack of adequate controls included in the contract/ permits • Inadequate staff scheduled to manage the event	• Screening requests to host the event • Including restrictions in the contracts/permits • Setting minimum staffing requirements
Preassembly Preparation	• Inexperienced staff hired to manage the event • Promotional efforts attract aggressive spectators • Event is oversold	• Training staff • Working with a media/ promotion company to attract families • Selling only one ticket per assigned seat
Assembly Process 	• Inadequate parking • Long lines at entrance • Contraband (e.g., weapons, drugs) brought into the stadium	• Timing public transportation to relieve traffic congestion • Hiring enough ticket-takers to facilitate spectator entry • Screening items brought into the stadium
Assembled Gathering	• Spectators crushed as the crowd moves toward the performance area • Spectators get drunk • Spectators attack the performers	• Providing sectioned and personal seating • Restricting alcohol sales • Creating access barriers
Dispersal Process 	• Spectators delayed as they all try to leave the venue at the same time • Pedestrian pushing and trampling at the exit area • Public urination when the restrooms become overcrowded	• Offering after-event activities • Redesigning the venue to include multiple exit points • Providing adequate facilities and proper placement

The five-stage framework's practical implication is that a comprehensive response should address the potential for violence at the last three stages: the assembly process, the assembled gathering, and the dispersal process. You should consider how you can block opportunities for violence by implementing interventions at each stage. For example, you may more easily prevent conflicts involving seating—at the assembly process—during the initial planning or preassembly preparation stages.

As you think about potential problems you can address at each stage, remember that six potential forms of violence are possible: verbal, gestures, missile throwing, swarming, property destruction, and physical. These forms of violence can occur at the assembly, gathering, and dispersal stages. Below we present a checklist for developing a strategy to prevent these forms of violence.

The checklist considers the six forms of violence and incorporates the five main categories of situational crime prevention responses (for more information, see www.popcenter.org): increasing efforts, increasing risks, reducing rewards, reducing provocations, and removing excuses.

1. *Increasing efforts* involves making it harder to misbehave. For example, access barriers make it more difficult for spectators to reach their targets.
2. *Increasing risks* involves making the perceived penalty for misbehavior more likely. For example, advertising the use of CCTV cameras informs spectators that they are under constant surveillance.
3. *Reducing rewards* decreases the gain from misbehavior. For example, sectioning seating with access barriers decreases the benefits of rushing forward.

4. *Reducing provocations* involves decreasing inducements to misbehave. For example, assigning seats with tickets and not selling more tickets than there are available seats reduces the incentives for patrons to crowd the ticket booths, gates, and seating sections.
5. *Removing excuses* involves making it harder for people to justify their misbehavior. For example, stationing ushers at each seating section removes excuses that spectators could not find their own seats, and removing noise meters makes it less likely that spectators will view forceful heckling as acceptable behavior.

Combining the six forms of violence with the five situational prevention techniques reveals 30 intervention categories (see Table 2). A comprehensive response involves using multiple situational approaches against multiple forms of violence. This approach ensures that one intervention's weaknesses are offset by other interventions' strengths.

In the example shown in the table, the response consists of eight interventions aimed at reducing each form of violence. These eight interventions involve all five different situational prevention types and target each form of violence at the gathering stage. Notice that some of the interventions can address more than one form of violence (e.g., CCTV cameras) at more than one stage (e.g., assembly and gathering).

Table 2
Example of a Comprehensive Response

Gathering Stage

Types	**Verbal**	**Gesture**	**Missile**	**Swarm**	**Property**	**Physical**
Increase Efforts				Erect access barriers	Bolt seats down	
Increase Risks	Set up a hotline	Install CCTV cameras				
Reduce Rewards			Erect stage out of target range			
Reduce Provocations						Have personal seating
Remove Excuses		Prohibit obscene and violent hand signals				

Last, we designed the "Planning Framework for Preventing Spectator Violence in Stadiums" checklist to provide you with a useful planning tool when developing a response. Supervisors can also use it for approving a response before implementation. A matrix of situational interventions and the six forms of violence are presented for the assembly, gathering, and dispersal stages. Again, while violence may occur at these stages, you may implement the interventions at an earlier stage (i.e., initial planning or preassembly preparation).

Planning Framework for Preventing Spectator Aggression in Stadiums

Event:_____ Date:_____

Assembly						
Types	**Verbal**	**Gesture**	**Missile**	**Swarm**	**Property**	**Physical**
Increase Efforts						
Increase Risks						
Reduce Rewards						
Reduce Provocations						
Remove Excuses						
Total						
Gathering						
Increase Efforts						
Increase Risks						
Reduce Rewards						
Reduce Provocations						
Remove Excuses						
Total						
Dispersal						
Increase Efforts						
Increase Risks						
Reduce Rewards						
Reduce Provocations						
Remove Excuses						
Total						

Planning Assessment*
1. Have you used at least one intervention type for each form of violence at each stage? Yes ☐ No ☐
2. If not, at which stage are forms of violence lacking interventions? _____
3. Have you used at least two situational *types* for the intervention? Yes ☐ No ☐
4. If not, which situational prevention types are not used? _____
*You should consider changes or additions to your overall action plan if you answered "No" to the above questions.

Endnotes

1. See Connors (2007) for a list of other law enforcement concerns when policing major events.
2. Eugene Police Commission (2001).
3. Jayson (2004).
4. Marsh et al. (1996).
5. Duke and Crolley (1996).
6. Russell (2004).
7. Ward (2002).
8. Ballard (2004).
9. O'Reilly (1999).
10. Lewis (2007); Sharp (1992); Ward (2002); Young (2002).
11. Young (2002).
12. Wann et al. (2003).
13. Gramling (2001); Young (1988).
14. O'Reilly (1999).
15. Number of venues taken from list published at www.sportsvenues.com.
16. Smith (2007).
17. McCallum (2004).
18. Price (2003).
19. Sappenfield (2004).
20. See literature review in Russell (2004).
21. Branscombe and Wann (1992).
22. Branscombe and Wann (1992); Poulin (1992); Roberts and Benjamin (2000); Russell (2004).
23. One example is the 2000 Roskilde Festival where nine fans were crushed to death during a Pearl Jam performance.
24. Arbetter and Holy (1994).
25. Stott and Adang (2005).
26. Price (2003).
27. Dewar (1979); Reifman, Larrick, and Fein (1991).
28. Bale (2000).

29. Veno and Veno (1993).
30. Wann et al. (2003).
31. Courakis (1999).
32. Madensen and Eck (2006).
33. Sivarajasingam, Moore, and Shepherd (2004).
34. Russell (1983).
35. Russell (2004).
36. Wann et al. (2003).
37. McNamara (1999).
38. Johnson (2004).
39. Neal et al. (2005); Nelson and Wechsler (2003).
40. Russell (2004).
41. Roadburg (1980).
42. Waddell (2000).
43. Getlen (2006).
44. Stark (1999).
45. Russell (2004).
46. Arms and Russell (1997).
47. See Miller and Gillentine's (2006) review of recent cases.
48. Arbetter and Holy (1994).
49. Garland and Rowe (1999).
50. Arbetter and Holy (1994).
51. Stott and Reicher (1998).
52. Getlen (2006).
53. Courakis (1999).
54. Connors (2007).
55. Courakis (1999).
56. See Felson's (1995) discussion of different types of controllers.
57. Alpert and Flynn (2000).
58. Stott and Adang (2005).
59. Coates (1972).
60. Estes (2004).
61. Connors (2007).

62. Rees and Schnepel (2008).
63. Human Effects Advisory Panel (2001).
64. Garland and Rowe (2000).
65. Stott and Reicher (1998).
66. Berk (1974); McPhail (1991).
67. Russell (2004); Westin (2003).
68. Cox (1998).
69. Abbott and Geddie (2001).
70. Cox (1998).
71. Abbott and Geddie (2001).
72. Abbott and Geddie (2001).
73. No NFL team has ever had the home field advantage, although it is possible since the location is chosen three to five years before the actual game is played.
74. University of California Police Department-Berkeley (2000).
75. Young (2002).
76. Young (2002).
77. Yonker (2007).
78. Brindley (1982).
79. Abbott and Geddie (2001); Dimmock and Grove (2005).
80. Russell (2004); Sir Norman Chester Center for Football Research (2001).
81. Associated Press (2005).
82. Rushin (2004).
83. Associated Press (2006).
84. Sir Norman Chester Center for Football Research (2001).
85. Young (2002).
86. Abbott and Geddie (2001).
87. LaRoi (2007).
88. Goodman (2001); Weiss and Davis (2005).
89. MacDonald (2004).
90. Abbott and Geddie (2001).
91. Talalay (2007).
92. Dimmock and Grove (2005).

93. Cox (1998).
94. Westin (2003).
95. Young (2002).
96. Bralley (2007).
97. Russell and Mustonen (1998).
98. Veno and Veno (1993).
99. Cox (1998).
100. Abbott and Geddie (2001).
101. Metscher (1996).
102. Stott and Adang (2005).
103. Nylen (1994).
104. O'Reilly (1999).
105. Morrone (1994).
106. Sharp (1992).
107. Morrison and Airey (2002).
108. Weiss and Davis (2005).
109. Weiss and Davis (2005)
110. Eugene Police Commission (2001).
111. Begert (1998); Eugene Police Commission (2001); Russell (2004); Weiss and Davis (2005).
112. Zezima (2005).
113. Eugene Police Commission (2001).
114. Dimmock and Grove (2005).

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